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Progress Report on the Establishment of the PADIS Network of National, Subregional and Institutional Participating Centres

The PADIS network

1. The PADIS network consists of national participating centres, subregional centres and institutional participating centres, all of which receive advisory services, training and information from PADIS and themselves input data into the PADIS information system for exchange with other countries in the region. Institutional Participating Centres are African regional or sub-regional institutions to which two or more States are parties. This includes both governmental and non-governmental institutions that are active in development information. However, while the operationalization of National Centres and Institutional Participating Centres has been carried out as planned, Subregional Centres are not yet operational at the level initially anticipated, except for the North African Development Information System (NADIS) which is hosted by the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC).

National Participating Centres (NPCs)

2. To date 36 countries have identified national participating centres to be focal points in the PADIS network. During the two years period, the number of national participating centres increased from 28 to 36, an increase of 35%. NPCs are government-designated institutions which perform the function of assisting national development planning by providing ready access to Information required by policy makers, planners and others engaged in national socio-economic development efforts. They also co-ordinate information activities of sectoral documentation and information centres at the national level.

3. Governments decide on the designation of the national participating centre in line with their unique national information situations. PADIS, however, distributes guidelines to assist them in the nomination. Common profiles for the centres include documentation and information centres in ministries of planning, national statistical offices, scientific and technological information centres and networks and research centres or libraries at national universities.

4. However PADIS new approach calls for an emphasis on an integrated approach to development information, with increased attention to numerical information, and for concentration of PADIS' national participating centres in strategic positions within Governments, such as in Ministries of Planning, where they could most readily affect the national strategic planning process. This is in line with recommendations of the UNDP 1990 in-depth evaluation of PADIS Phase III. By working through national participating centres increasingly located in Ministries of planning, PADIS will contribute to the strengthening of regional information systems and to the development of statistical capabilities.

5. The 36 national participating centres named to date are listed as follows:

Country	Name of Centre
ALGERIA	Centre National d'Information et de Documentation Economique, Ministère du commerce
BENIN	Centre National Automatise de Documentation et d'Information (CENADI), Ministère du plan de la Statistique et de la Coopération Technique,
BOTSWANA	National Institute for Research, University of Botswana
BURKINA FASO	Service Central de la Documentation et des Archives, Secrétariat Général, Ministère du Plan et de la Coopération
BURUNDI	Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques, Ministère du Plan
CAMEROON	Ministère du Plan et de l'Aménagement du Territoire, Direction Générale de la Planification
CAPE VERDE	Centro de Documentação e Informação para o Desinvolvimento (CDID)
CENTRAFRIC	Centre de Documentation et des Archives, Ministère du Plan, des Statistiques et de la Coopération Internationale
CONGO	Centre National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, Ministère du Plan et de l'Economie
DJIBOUTI	Secrétariat Général à l'Information
EGYPT	National Scientific and Technological Information Network
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	Ministério de planificacion y desarrolo economico
ETHIOPIA	Science and Technology Commission

GAMBIA	Documentation Unit, Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development
GHANA	Ghana Scientific and Technological Information Network
GUINEE	Centre National de Documentation et d'Information pour le Développement, Secrétariat d'Etat à la Culture et à la Recherche Scientifique
KENYA	National Council for Science and Technology
LESOTHO	Library, National University of Lesotho
LIBYA	Centre National d'Information et de Documentation
MALAWI	University of Malawi
MAROC	Centre National de Documentation, Ministère du Plan
MAURITIUS	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
NIGER	Centre d'Information et de Documentation, Bureau de la Statistique et de l'Informatique, Ministère du Plan
NIGERIA	Federal Office of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
RWANDA	Centre de Documentation, Ministère du Plan
SENEGAL	Centre National de Documentation Scientifique et Technique
SEYCHELLES	Department of Planning and External Relations
SIERRA LEONE	Development Documentation Centre, Ministry of National Development & Economic Planning
SUDAN	National Documentation Centre, National Council for Research

SWAZILAND	Swaziland National Library Service (SNLS)
TOGO	Centre de Documentation Technique, Ministère du Plan et de l'Industrie
TUNISIA	Centre de Documentation Nationale
UGANDA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
ZAIRE	Service Présidentiel d'Etudes, Bureau du Président fondateur, Présidence de la République
ZAMBIA	Lusaka Library, University of Zambia
ZIMBABWE	National Library and Documentation Service

6. In order to improve the ability of national centres effectively participate in the PADIS network, PADIS held group training courses in PADIS methodologies for a number of these centres during the period and awarded fellowships to some of the centres. Training curriculum included utilization of computer programmes for bibliographic data base management as well as other aspects of PADIS tools and methodologies for bibliographic work. Also, most NPCs received advisory services from PADIS to assist them develop their national information infrastructures. They also received information in printed form on request and on Selective Dissemination of Infomration basis as well as data downloaded on diskettes and tapes from the PADIS information system.

7. To be able to meet users demands and to contribute in the PADIS system and benefit from it, National Participating Centres are setting up national information networks co-ordinating the storage and dissemination of information with specialized and sectoral information centres which will take into account all sectors of development in their respective countries. Such information centres are located in the following sectors: industry and trade, standardization, intellectual property, food and agriculture, mining, human settlement and construction, transport, energy, statistics, socio-culture, health and environment, education, mass media, basic and applied research, etc.

Institutional participating centres (IPCs)

8. Institutional participating centres are the subject-oriented African subregional nodes in the PADIS network. They comprise regional institutions responsible for co-ordination of information collection, classification and dissemination and development of tools and methodology in their special subjects of focus. These include ECA-sponsored subregional and regional institutions as well as other institutions in the region.

9. Major strides were made over the last two years in the strengthening of institutional participation in the PADIS network, primarily through meetings of the Standing Committee on Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems at Regional and Subregional Institutions in Africa. Since the Sixth Session of the Joint Conference, two meetings of the Committee were held in Addis Ababa, from 14-16 November 1990 and again from 11-13 November 1991.

10. A draft Cooperation Agreement between PADIS and ECA-sponsored institutions was presented at the First Meeting of the Standing Committee held in Addis Ababa. The agreement which was prepared by a Steering Committee defines the responsabilities of each party, their duties and privileges. It was adopted by members of the Standing Committee for presentation to the Eighth Conference of Chief Executives of ECA Sponsored institutions. Under the terms of the agreement between PADIS and its institutional participating centres, the responsibilities of PADIS include the maintenance of a regional complementary data base of development information containing information supplied by the IPCs, making available to IPCs various information products and services, provision of training in information processing, provision of comprehensive bibliographies, promotion of applications of information norms and standards, assistance in the development of microform capabilities; establishment of a central clearing house for documents in the regional data bases, and maintenance of a listing of IPCs. PADIS also ensures IPCs free of charge access to all its outputs. In return IPCs agree to collect and transmit to PADIS information which falls within PADIS' scope, adherence to PADIS' norms and standards for harmonization and standardization of information, ensuring effective use of PADIS outputs, ensuring delivery of hard copy of documents contributed to the system.

11. After adoption of the agreement by Chief Executives of ECA Sponsored Institutions and following the Second Meeting of the Standing Committee, a copy of the agreement was sent to all regional and subregional institutions in Africa for signature by their respective institutions. As of 18 December 1991, 36 institutions have officially signed the agreement. The list of signatories is as follows:

African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO)

Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA)

African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO)

Association of African Universities (AAU)

Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (AATPO)

Organization for the Management and Development of the Kagera River Basin (OBK)

Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (RECTAS)

Regional Remote Sensing Centre (CRTO)

Centre Régional d'Energie Solaire (CRES)

Centre Régional de Documentation et d'Information Commerciales (CRIC)

Panafrican Institute for Development (IPD/AOS)

Eastern and Southern African Mineral Resources Development Centre (ESAMRDC)

Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme (ESAURP)

Institut Sous-Régional Multisectoriel de Technologie Appliquée de Planification et d'Evaluation de Projets (ISTA)

Panafrican Postal Union (UPAP)

Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA)

African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP)

Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC)

Arab Organization for Agriculture Development (AOD)

International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE)

African Regional Centre for Engineering Design and Manufacturing (ARCEDEM)

Panafrican News Agency (PANA)

African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT)

Women Research and Documentation Project (WRDP)

Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI)

Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS)

Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD)

Lake Chad Basin Commission (CBLT)

International Energy Foundation (IEF)

Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle (OAPI)

African Development Bank (ADB)

International Government Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD)

Centre International des Civilisations Bantu

Fédération des Chambres de Commerce de l'Afrique Centrale

Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD)

12. Among the recommendations made by members of the Standing Committe were for PADIS to explore the possibility of compiling a directory of databases and information systems at regional and subregional institutions in Africa. PADIS thus sent out a questionnaire to some 78 subregional and regional development institutions in Africa in May 1990 and August 1991.

13. Of the 78 questionnaires disseminated, only 23 replies were received. From the replies, two were discarded because the institutions replied that they had no information systems or data bases. A directory, has been compiled from the 23 institutions whose activities were suitable [1].

14. In order to increase the utilization of the network and increase the delivery speed of requests and responses, PADIS has initiated a project, with IDRC assistance, entitled "Computer Networking in Africa." The project is testing many newly-developed forms of information technology which have not been introduced hitherto or only on a limited basis in Africa (these include CD-ROM, optical erasable disks, use of modems, scanners and facsimile transmission) for improved development information exchange. If these tests are successful, efforts would be made to introduce the technologies on a wide scale in an effort to alleviate some of the information availability problems the Africa region faces. Participants in this pilot project have been drawn from PADIS' national focal points, PADIS' institutional participating centres and from PADIS subregional centres.

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[1] This directory was published and presented to the Fourth Meeting of the Standing Committee on the Harmonization and Standardization of Documentation and Information Systems at Subregional and Regional Institutions in Africa, held from 11-13 November 1991 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

15. The objective of the project is to contribute towards the advancement of data communications information technology in Africa, to improve the flow of information for socio-economic development in Africa and the timely utilization of existing information systems. The project will also facilitate computer connections between institutions in the region and PADIS, and from PADIS to other parts of the world.

16. The following institutions are participating in the project activities:

(a) **from PADIS national focal points**, the Centre national de documentation (CND) Rabat, Morocco and the National Institute for Research (NIR), University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana;

(b) **from PADIS' institutional participating centres**: the African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO), Nairobi, Kenya; the Council on Economic and Social Development Research in Africa (CODESRIA), Dakar, Senegal; the African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), Dakar, Senegal; The Kagera Basin Organization (KBO), Kigali, Rwanda; and the East and Southern African Universities Research Project (ESAURP), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

(c) **from PADIS' subregional centres**: the Arab League Documentation Centre (ALDOC) in Tunis; (PADIS subregional centre for North Africa); the East and Southern African Development Information System (ESADIS), located at the ECA office in Lusaka, Zambia; and the West African Development Information System (WADIS), located at the ECA subregional office in Niamey, Niger;

17. The above list, however, is not exclusive; in order to maintain flexibility and to promote the networking of networks it will remain open to other institutions at their own expense which show interest in participating in the experiment. Between PADIS and members of its network, there is a tremendous wealth of development information that can be shared with users in the Africa region as well as elsewhere. Although the number of users of PADIS' products and services are increasing constantly and electronic means of access and delivery are used

wherever feasible, these have just included dial-up access for users outside Addis Ababa.

PADIS' subregional centres

18. At the time of their inception, the subregional centres were supposed to play a major role in the establishment of information services (where none exist) and in the improvement of existing services. These centres would further forge links among all the countries of the subregion allowing them to utilize one another's information resources as well as the information resources of the rest of the region. Helping each country in the subregion join in a network that would fully utilize information resources of the subregion and the region as a whole and co-ordinate the existing or future sectoral information systems are the main goals of subregional centres.

19. Padis subregional centres are designated as follows:

ESADIS Subregional centre for Eastern and Southern Africa, located in Lusaka, Zambia.

CADIS Subregional centre for Great Lakes and Central Africa. To be located in Kinshasa, Zaire.

NADIS Centre for North Africa, functioning under cooperative arrangements with Arab League Documentation Centre in Cairo, Egypt.

WADIS Subregional Centre for West Africa located in Niamey, Niger.

20. At the time when resolution 438/XVII was passed by the ECA' Seventh Session of Conference of Ministers requesting, inter alia, the ECA Executive Secretary "...to step up the mobilization of funds for the establishment of national and subregioinal centres...", the functions of the subregional centres were seen as the following:

- Organization of meetings at subregional level for the discussion and preparation of PADIS policies;

- Organization of training programmes and *stages* for national participating centres from the subregion;

- Implementation of data communication capabilities in order to play the role of sub-regional nodes of PADISNET.

- Installation of data processing capabilities in order to implement pools of sub-regional data bases and data banks with the collaboration of the PADIS [national and institutional] participating centres;

21. Thus of these, the first three have been implemented in the subregions, but from the PADIS central co-ordinating office, rather than from the subregions. The retardation in development of subregional centres was largely because during the third phase of PADIS (1987-1991), PADIS has lacked funds for the full implementation of the subregional centres. PADIS' major source of funding (about 90% of available resources) during the period was the United Nations Development Programme. In granting the funding for this period, UNDP made the following comment:

> "The national centres should receive major priority in the next phase of the project. The role of the sub-regional centres should be restricted at this stage to coordination with and opening channels of communication to the national centres as well as providing feedback on the products and services of PADIS."

22. However, the project funding under RAF/86/053 (PADIS Phase III) did not provide any funding for even this limited role for the subregional centres. In order to promote the subregional centres, PADIS was forced to apply its regional resources for training, fellowships and advisory services to the subregional centres.

23. Despite the lack of financial means to make the subregional centres operational, the UNDP Evaluation Mission of PADIS (1990) recommended, because of the slow operationalization of some subregional centres, new developments in information technology and financial constraints, recommended the abandonment of non operational centres unless other sources of funding were found.

24. The mission felt, however, that the subregional centres still had an important role, *viz.* "Provided adequate resources are made available, the sub-regional centers can play a useful role in bringing PADIS closer to the field and in decentralized efforts in the field of sensitization, training and advisory services. Main functions for the sub-regional centers as perceived in the field would be:

- closer presence of PADIS to National Participating Centers;
- partly take over training/advisory work from center;
- repackage and or compile development information (macro-economic, sectoral, project related and business) at the sub-regional level;
- monitor developments in user needs;

- monitor and where possible co-ordinate related activities under other projects, networks or sub-regional organizations."

25. Thus the problem immediately facing the subregional centres is a financial one. PADIS has no resources for their operation. Once computer equipment is available, the amount needed for a subregional centre is estimated at US$200,000/year for a computer systems analyst, an information scientist, data entry clerk, a secretary, and funds to maintain the computer, deliver advisory services and training.

26. If funds are not forthcoming, the alternatives for making operational PADIS subregional centres appear to be the following:

a. Locating subregional centres in MULPOCs

This could be feasible with the MULPOCs using their operational funds for staff and the maintenance of the compu